

February 12, 2013

The Honorable Andrew Maynard  
The Honorable Antonio Guerrero  
Co-Chairpersons, Transportation Committee  
Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Dear Chairmen Maynard and Guerrero:

I am an orthopedic surgeon in practice in the New Haven area, and an avid cyclist, logging 3000-4000 miles per year. I frequently commute by bicycle from my home in Guilford to my offices in Branford, Hamden and New Haven. I actively promote cycling as both an alternative to driving and for recreational activities. I have extensive experience with the interaction between cars and bicycles both as a cyclist and in my profession caring for other cyclists who have borne the brunt of that interaction.

The majority of the cycling community does not support proposed bill No. 103, LCO No. 531, AN ACT REQUIRING BICYCLISTS TO RIDE SINGLE FILE ON A PUBLIC ROAD.

The proposed bill states that it is required as a safety measure, "in order to permit motorists to safely pass and yield three feet to the bicyclists as required by law". This is already addressed in current law (Sec. 14-286b) which states that cyclists may not ride two abreast if/when impeding motor vehicle traffic.

This is not a safety issue, but an issue of education (for both motor vehicle drivers and cyclists) and enforcement (citations for cyclists impeding traffic while riding two abreast). As far as safety is concerned, there is no evidence (in the DOT motor vehicle accident database) that cyclists riding two abreast have been involved in any collisions with motor vehicles (cyclists always lose when involved with a motor vehicle).

Connecticut has miles and miles of roads with minimal traffic and miles with very wide shoulders where cyclists can ride two abreast and still not impede traffic. Under SB103, this would be illegal.

As a father of three children who were raised cycling on Connecticut roads, I often rode next to my children in order to instruct them in safe riding and protect them from road hazards. Under SB 103, this would be illegal.

Cycling in a "paceline" would no longer be legal under SB103, because as the lead riders tire, they move to the left and allow others to pass while they drop to the back of the pack. Under SB103, it would be illegal for a cyclist to overtake another rider.

If the current law is not being enforced, is there reason to believe that a new more restrictive law would be enforced?

By way of comparison, cyclists have been hit by cars "turning right on red" (this author included). A new law is not created eliminating right turn on red completely because a few motorists did not follow existing law. So why in the case of SB103, where there is no factual evidence of risk of injury to the cyclist, is this new proposed law being pursued?

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Cyclists should not be riding two abreast on busy roads. Current law states that it is illegal to impede traffic riding two abreast. So, please enforce the existing law and don't create new law that will definitely have unintended consequences.

Respectfully,

Rowland B. Mayor, MD  
Guilford, CT